

Purple Hairstreaks attracted to a swimming pool

Purple Hairstreaks (*Quercusia quercus* Linn.) are rare visitors to our garden. In the last 20 years I have seen only three. 1989 has however been exceptional, during the first days of August I had seen three. Then on the evening of 5th August I found two in the swimming pool, one dead and one still alive. I found another in the pool on the morning of 6th. The pool was then in use for the rest of the day and no more were seen. However I found another in the pool at 10.00 am on the morning of the 7th and two more at lunch time. I kept a periodic eye on the pool on the 8th and found another in it at 12.45. During this period the weather was warm and sunny. It then turned more windy and cloudy and no more were seen.

Those that I rescued alive were all placed some distance from the pool to dry out. Although I cannot be sure, I think the seven removed from the pool over this four day period were all different specimens, they were of both sexes and all past their prime. I never actually saw one entering the water, but from their position in the pool, they had all clearly alighted on the water surface, not fallen in from the edge. Although there are oak trees in the area, there are none near the pool.

We have had this pool for many years and although we find the odd small moth in it from time to time, only once before have I found a butterfly. Some years ago I found a very worn Meadow Brown (*Maniola jurtina* Linn.). I suspect this simply fell in in extreme old age. We have lots of other butterflies, browns, whites and vanessids in the garden and this year particularly large numbers of Holly Blues (*Celastrina argiolus* Linn.). None of these are attracted to the pool.

There are two ponds in the garden but the Purple Hairstreaks do not seem to be attracted to them. I can only assume it is the pale blue colour of the swimming pool that attracts them. While I do not know of other reports of this suicidal behaviour, there have been a number of records of Purple Hairstreaks being attracted to light traps at night. Perhaps this fatal attraction for our swimming pool is part of the same phenomenon. — M.J. PERCIVAL, Holmesdale Cottage, Mid-Holmwood, Dorking, Surrey RH5 4HF.

***Aplota palpella* Haworth (Lep.: Oecophoridae) in Kent**

Three specimens of this local moth were taken by myself and Mr Dennis O'Keeffe, in an m.v. trap in the National Trust woods adjoining Scotney Castle, Kent. The first two appeared on the night of the 2nd August 1989, and the third moth on that of the 8th August 1989. On both occasions the temperature at midnight was around the 17°C mark, and moths were attracted in considerable numbers. So far as I am aware, this is the first record of occurrence of *A. palpella* in Kent. — J.M. CHALMERS-HUNT, 1 Hardcourts Close, West Wickham, Kent BR4 9LG.